

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY LONDOPJS
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SANA 0144

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SUBJECT: SAUDI MILITARY ATTACHE ON INTERNAL SITUATION

REF: SANA 55

1. SUMMARY: SAUDI MILITARY ATTACHE HUDAYAN WAS EXTREMELY POSITIVE IN HIS ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT INTERNAL YEMENI SCENE, WHICH HE DESCRIBED AS "GOOD AND STABLIZED." HUDAYAN INDICATED SAUDI ARABIA NOW GIVING FULL SUPPORT TO GHASHMI REGIME, WITH PARTICULAR EMPHASIS ON BOTH MILITARY AND CIVILIAN TRAINING. HUDAYAN ALSO NOTED THAT TRIBAL ELEMENTS NOW APPEAR TO BE RALLYING TO CENTRAL GOVERNMENT AND THAT GHASHMI'S POSITION HAS BEEN CONSIDERABLY STRENGTHENED THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY. SAUDIS/YEMENIS PLAN TO HAVE NEXT COORDINATING COMMITTEE MEETING IN RIYADH IN LATE JANUARY WITH PRINCE SULTAN VISITING SANA IN MID-FEBRUARY. END SUMMARY.

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2. DURING JAN 8. MEETING, COL SALIH HUDAYAN SPOKE AT SOME LENGTH ON THE CURRENT POLITICAL AND SECURITY SITUATION IN YEMEN WHICH HE DESCRIBED AS "GOOD AND STABLIZED." HE SAID THAT GHASHMI HAS BEEN WORKING VERY HARD TO WIN OVER THE NORTHERN TRIBAL LEADERS AND IS APPARENTLY SUCCEEDING IN THIS TASK. IN THIS REGARD, HE NOTED THAT A GROUP OF 19 LEADERS FROM THE MARIB REGION

WERE TO BE MET BY GHASHMI LATER THE SAME MORNING AS PART OF THIS EFFORT. HE ADDED THAT SHAYKH ABD AL-AHMAR IS GIVING HIS FULL SUPPORT TO GHASHMI AND THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT, WITHOUT DEMANDING ANY QUIDS PRO QUO OTHER THAN ASKING THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT TO SPEND MORE MONEY IN THE NORTH. (OVER THE LAST FEW WEEKS, MINISTERS OF KEY DEVELOPMENT MINISTRIES IN DEDUCATION, HEALTH, PUBLIC WORKS HAVE ALL BEEN VISITING PARTS OF NORTH AND PROMISING PROJECTS.) HUDAYAN WENT ON TO SAY THAT SHAYKH AL-AHMAR WILL MORE THEN LIKELY EMERGE AS A "SENIOR ADVISOR" TO THE PRESIDENT. HUDAYAN DID NOT KNOW, HOWEVER, HOW THAT POSITION WOULD BE FORMERLY DESIGNATED.

3. HUDAYAN OBSERVED THAT WHILE AL-AHMAR APPEARS TO HAVE MADE HIS PEACE WITH THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT, THE POSITION OF MUJAHID ABU SHUWARIB WAS STILL NOT CLEAR BECAUSE OF HIS CONNECTION WITH THE SINAN ABU LUHUM AND THE AL-AYNI GROUP. HUDAYAN OPINED THAT GHASHMI MAY WELL ACCEPT ABU SHUWARIB BACK IN SOME FUNCTION BUT DOUBTED THAT GHASHMI WILL BE WILLING TO TREAT WITH THE ABU LUHUMS.

4. HUDAYAN STATED THAT SAUDI ARABIA NOW REALIZES THAT IN THE FUTURE IT WILL BE IMPORTANT TO INFLUENCE NOT ONLY THE SHAYKHS IN YEMEN BUT ALSO THE EMERGING EDUCATED CLASS WHICH WILL ACTUALLY BE RUNNING THE CONFIDENTIAL

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COUNTRY. HE SAID THAT PRINCE SULTAN HAS GIVEN HIM THE "GREEN LIGHT" TO INFORM THE YEMENI GOVERNMENT THAT FUNDS WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING NOT ONLY OF ARMY PERSONNEL BUT OF CIVILIANS AS WELL. HE SAID THAT GHASHMI HAS ALREADY PROMISED THAT NO MORE MILITARY PERSONNEL WILL GO TO EAST EUROPE OR TO THE SOVIET UNION AND PLANS ARE BEING MADE TO SEND THESE MEN TO SAUDI ARABIA, INDIA, PAKISTAN AND THE UNITED STATES, WITH SAUDI ARABIA FOOTING THE BILL. HE ALSO SAID THAT HE INTENDS TO BE IN TOUCH WITH THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION TO RECOMMEND THAT YEMEN PULL OUT OF THE SOVIET BLOC ALL YEMENIS PRESENTLY THERE ON SCHOLARSHIPS AND TO SEND THEM EITHER TO SAUDI ARABIAN INSTITUTIONS OR OTHER INSTITUTIONS IN THE MIDDLE EAST OR THE WEST. HE SAID THIS IS THE MOST IMPORTANT TASK IN THE FUTURE FOR SAUDIARABIA TO BE SURE THAT THE NEW GENERATION IN YEMEN GETS THE SAME KIND OF EDUCATION AS ITS COUNTERPART GENERATION IN SAUDI ARABIA SO THAT BOTH COUNTRIES CAN COOPERATE

IN DEVELOPMENT AND DEFEND THEMSELVES AGAINST COMMON ENEMIES.

5. ON THE POLITICAL SCENE, HUDAYAN SAID THAT HE AND FONMIN

ASNAJ WILL BE TRAVELING TO RIYADH OVER THE NEXT WEEK TO DISCUSS NEW POLITICAL REFORMS WHICH GHASHMI INTENDS TO INSTITUTE BUT WISHES TO BRIEF THE SAUDI ARABIAN LEADERSHIP ABOUT AHEAD OF TIME (SEE REFTEL IN WHICH ASNAJ ALSO DESCRIBED PURPOSE OF THIS VISIT). HUDAYAN STATED THAT FOLLOWING THIS MEETING, HE EXPECTS THAT THE YEMI/ SAUDI ARABIAN JOINT COORDINATING COMMITTEE (CHAIRLED BY PRINCE SULTAN AND FONMIN ASNAJ) WILL HAVE ITS NEXT MEETING IN RIYADH. (HE NOTED THAT THE LAST SCHEDULED MEETING WHICH WAS TO HAVE BEEN HELD IN SANA, WAS POSTPONED DUE TO THE ASSASSINATION OF HAMDI.) FOLLOWING THIS MEETING, HE EXPECTS PRINCE SULTAN WILL VISIT SANA IN FEBRUARY, PRIMARILY TO INAUGURATE THE JOINT SAUDI ARABIAN/YEMENI AIRLINES, BUT ALSO TO DISCUSS FUTURE COORDINATING MOVES WITH THE YEMEN

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LEADERS.

6. COMMENT: HUDAYAN HAS ALWAYS BEEN REASONABLY OPEN WITH US AND HAS NEVER BEEN RELUCTANT TO DISCUSS THE STATE OF SAUDI/YEMENI RELATIONS, WHETHER GOOD OR BAD. IN THIS RESPECT, HE HAS BEEN VERY MUCH LIKE ASNAJ. IT IS INTERESTING, THEREFORE, TO NOTE THAT BOTH MEN ARE BREATHING OPTIMISM ABOUT THE CURRENT STATE OF THESE RELATIONS. MEANWHILE, IF IN FACT PRINCE SULTAN HAS GIVEN THE "GREEN LIGHT" TO HUDAYAN TO BEGIN WOOING THE EMERGING URBAN ELITES OF YEMEN, THIS IS INDEED A MAJOR BREAKTHROUGH FOR YEMENI/SAUDI RELATIONS. TIME WILL TELL. SCOTES

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